

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2011**

**SESSION LAW 2011-51
HOUSE BILL 140**

AN ACT AMENDING THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF OAK ISLAND TO PROVIDE
A PROCEDURE TO RECALL ELECTED OFFICIALS, SUBJECT TO A
REFERENDUM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Charter of the Town of Oak Island, being S.L. 1999-66, as amended by S.L. 2001-478 and S.L. 2003-84, is amended by adding a new section to read as follows:

"Sec. 5.4. Recall of Elected Officials. (a) The Mayor or any member of the Town Council of the Town of Oak Island may be removed from office in the manner provided for in this section.

(b) A recall petition committee may file an affidavit with the Brunswick County Director of Elections containing the name of the elected official whose removal is sought and a general statement of the grounds alleged for removal. The Director of Elections shall provide the recall petition committee filing the affidavit with petition forms for demanding the removal of a Town elected official. The petition forms shall (i) be signed by the Director of Elections; (ii) be dated on the date of issuance; (iii) be addressed to the Brunswick County Board of Elections; (iv) contain the name of the persons to whom the forms are issued; (v) contain the name of the elected official whose removal is sought; (vi) contain a general statement of the grounds on which the removal is sought; and (vii) provide a place for signatures. The Director of Elections shall promptly deliver a copy of the petition issued by the Director of Elections to the Town Clerk, who shall enter the copy of the petition in a record book kept for that purpose. The record book shall be maintained at the Office of the Town Clerk.

(c) A recall petition committee authorized under subsection (b) of this section shall be comprised of at least five members who are registered voters within the Town and who shall represent the signers of the petition. Each member of the recall petition committee shall sign the petition and shall be responsible for circulating the petition within the Town limits and for assembling and returning the petition to the Board of Elections as required by subsection (d) of this section.

(d) A recall petition to be effective must be returned to the Board of Elections within 30 days after the filing of the affidavit. To be sufficient, a recall petition must bear the signatures of at least twenty-five percent (25%) of the registered voters of the Town as shown by the registration records of the last preceding general municipal election.

(e) The signatures to the petition need not all be appended to one paper. Each signer shall add his or her signature and place of residence, giving the complete street name, street number, and town.

(f) The Board of Elections shall investigate the sufficiency of any petition and certify the results of the investigation to the Town Council. The Board of Elections may employ persons as it deems necessary to undertake that investigation. The Town Council shall reimburse the Board of Elections for the reasonable cost of the investigation. The Board of



Elections may adopt rules concerning the validation of signatures appearing on the recall petition.

(g) The Board of Elections shall complete its investigation and issue its certification of the results of the investigation within 10 days after the filing of any petition. However, the Board of Elections shall not be obligated to conduct an investigation in any 30-day period immediately preceding or in any 10-day period immediately following a countywide election. If, by the Board of Elections' certification, the petition is shown to be insufficient, it may be amended within 10 days from the date of the certificate. The Board shall, within 10 days after any amendment, complete an investigation of the amended petition. If the certification of the results of the investigation shows the amended petition to be insufficient, a copy of the petition shall be returned to the recall petition committee filing the petition, without prejudice to the filing of a new petition.

(h) Upon a determination that a sufficient recall petition has been submitted, the Board of Elections shall submit the petition to the Town Clerk, who shall submit it to the Town Council and shall notify the elected official whose removal is sought. If the elected official whose removal is sought does not resign within five days after receiving the notice, the Town Council shall order and fix a date for holding a recall election. Subject to the remaining provisions of this section, an election shall be held not less than 60 nor more than 90 days after the petition has been certified as being sufficient. If any other general or special election is scheduled within this period, the Town Council shall schedule the special election at the same time. If the provisions of general law prohibit the holding of a special election during this time period and no general or special election is otherwise scheduled during that period of time, then the Town Council shall schedule the special recall election for a date within 10 days after the last day of the period of time during which special elections are prohibited by general law.

(i) The Board of Elections shall cause legal notice of the election to be published. That notice shall include the general statement of the grounds on which the recall is sought as alleged in the affidavit and shall make all arrangements for holding the election in accordance with general law. The recall election shall be conducted, returned, and the results declared as in other elections in the Town of Oak Island. The Town shall reimburse the reasonable costs of the recall election to the Board of Elections.

(j) The question of recalling any number of elected officials may be submitted at the same election. However, as to each individual elected official, a separate petition shall be filed and there shall be an entirely separate ballot.

(k) The ballots used in a recall election shall submit the following proposition:

" FOR AGAINST

The recall of (name and title of elected official)."

(l) If less than a majority of the votes cast on the question of recalling an elected official are for recall, the elected official shall continue in office for the remainder of the unexpired term and, except as provided by subsection (n) of this section, shall be subject to recall as before. If a majority of the votes are for the recall of the elected official designated on the ballot, the elected official shall, regardless of any defects in the recall petition, be deemed removed from office on the date the Board of Elections certifies the results of the recall election.

(m) If an elected official concerning whom a sufficient recall petition is submitted to the Town Council resigns before the recall election or is removed from office as a result of the recall election, the vacancy shall be filled in the manner provided by Section 4.3 or Section 4.4 of this Charter for filling vacancies in that office, except as provided in subsection (o) of this section. An elected official who resigns after a sufficient petition for his or her recall has been submitted to the Town Council or who is removed from office by the voters as a result of a recall election shall not be appointed to fill the vacancy caused by that elected official's own resignation or removal.

(n) No recall petition shall be filed in accordance with subsection (d) of this section against an elected official who has been subjected to a recall election, and not removed thereby, until at least six months after that recall election. No recall petition shall be filed in accordance with subsection (d) of this section against an elected official during the first three months of the term of that office or during the six months before the expiration of the term of that office.

(o) If the recall of two or more members of the Town Council or the recall of the Mayor and one or more members of the Town Council are effected at a single recall election, the successors of the elected officials recalled shall be elected by the registered voters of the Town at a special municipal election, and the successors shall serve for the remainder of the terms of the elected officials recalled. The members of the Town Council who have not been recalled shall call that special election, which shall be conducted by the Brunswick County Board of Elections under the laws then governing elections in the State. If the recall of all or a majority of the members of the Town Council is effected at a single election, they shall continue in office for the purpose, and only for the purpose, of calling a special municipal election for the election of their successors as provided in this section. That election shall also be conducted by the Brunswick County Board of Elections under the laws then governing elections in the State. The Town shall reimburse the reasonable costs of the recall election to the Board of Elections."

SECTION 2. Section 1 of this act becomes effective only if approved by the registered voters of the Town of Oak Island in a referendum conducted by the Brunswick County Board of Elections on November 8, 2011. The referendum shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes. The question on the ballot shall be:

"[] FOR [] AGAINST

Amending the Charter of the Town of Oak Island to allow for recall elections for the Mayor or any member of the Town Council."

If a majority of the votes cast in the referendum shall be in the affirmative, Section 1 of this act shall become effective on the date that the Brunswick County Board of Elections certifies the results of the referendum. If a majority of the votes cast in the referendum shall be against the charter amendment, Section 1 of this act shall have no force and effect.

SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 21st day of April, 2011.

s/ Walter H. Dalton
President of the Senate

s/ Thom Tillis
Speaker of the House of Representatives